

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 207266 TOSEC 220016

WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS SECRETARY KISSINGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, POPS

SUBJECT: SITREP AS OF 0600 HOURS, AUGUST 20

PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

PLANNED US MILITARY MOVES: DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT PARK

CHARGE STERN AND GENERAL STILWELL BRIEFED PRESIDENT PARK ON THE B-52 FLIGHTS, THE DEPLOYMENT OF F-111S, AND THE TREE SURGERY PLAN. PARK REITERATED HIS APPRECIATION OF THE FIRM POSITION BEING TAKEN BY THE US AND HIS BELIEF THAT OUR RESPONSE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THE PRESENT PLANS FOR THE TREE SURGERY, SAYING THAT ESCALATION SHOULD ONLY EVOLVE IF THE NORTH ESCALATES. HE HAD NO SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER US ACTIONS.

PRESIDENT PARK'S PUBLIC STATEMENT ON INCIDENT

IN A SPEECH AT A MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATION EXERCISE READ
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BY THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, PARK CALLED THE JSA

INCIDENT QUOTE COLLECTIVE MURDER UNQUOTE AND SAID FROM NOW ON, QUOTE WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE IMMEDIATE PUNITIVE ACTIONS, WHETHER SMALL OR LARGE, UNQUOTE AGAINST NORTHERN PROVOCATIONS. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE PROVOCATIONS WERE A NORTH KOREAN MEANS OF CONCEALING ITS QUOTE ECONOMIC BANKRUPTCY UNQUOTE AND INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLES.

BLUE HOUSE OPINION ON THE INCIDENT

SOME OFFICIALS CLOSE TO PRESIDENT PARK BELIEVE THAT NORTH KOREA MADE SEVERAL ERRORS WITH THE JSA INCIDENT. THEY FEEL NORTH KOREA MIGHT HAVE DONE BETTER TO ATTACK SOUTH KOREANS RATHER THAN US TROOPS AS THE ATTACK WILL INFLUENCE US PUBLIC OPINION TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE NORTH WHEREAS AN ATTACK ON SOUTH KOREANS WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE SAME IMPACT. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THE INCIDENT CAN BE USED TO COUNTER NORTH KOREAN PROPAGANDA AT THE UNGA. OUR EMBASSY NOTES THAT THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A RENEWED THREAT FROM THE NORTH ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE HAD THE EFFECT OF INCREASING SUPPORT FOR THE PARK GOVERNMENT. THE LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE AGREED TO CALL A JOINT MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES SATURDAY TO HEAR REPORTS FROM ROKG OFFICIALS ON THE JSA INCIDENT.

NORTH KOREAN MILITARY ACTIONS

THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN NORTH KOREAN MILITARY POSTURE AND NO MOVEMENTS OF MAJOR MILITARY UNITS REPORTED.

WORLD REACTION

INTERNATIONAL REACTION CONTINUES TO BE SPARSE:

-- NONE OF THE MONITORED ARAB MEDIA HAVE COMMENTED ON THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT, NOR HAVE THE MEDIA OF CYPRUS, GREECE OR TURKEY. MOST OF THESE HAVE CARRIED FACTUAL STORIES OF THE INCIDENT BASED ON INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPORTS.

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-- SOUTHEAST AND SOUTH ASIAN MEDIA REACTION IS SIMILARLY LIGHT. VIETNAMESE, CAMBODIAN AND LAO MEDIA HAVE NOT MENTIONED EITHER THE INCIDENT OR THE NORTH KOREAN FORCE ALERT.

-- THE LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH CALLS KIM IL SUNG A QUOTE MEGLOMANIAC COMMUNIST DICTATOR UNQUOTE AND THE QUOTE WHOLE AFFAIR COMES AS A REMINDER THAT HE COULD SEND

THE AREA UP IN FLAMES AGAIN. UNQUOTE

-- HAVANA RADIO HAS REPORTED THE INCIDENT WITHOUT
MENTIONING US INVOLVEMENT: QUOTE AGENTS OF THE PARK CHUNG
HEE REGIME CREATED AN INCIDENT IN ORDER TO BLAME THE DPRK.
UNQUOTE AN EARLIER CUBAN GOVERNMENT STATEMENT HAD NOT
MENTIONED THE INCIDENT.

-- FIELD MARSHAL IDI AMIN HAS SUPPORTED THE ATTACK ON THE
UNC PERSONNEL AFTER AN EXPLANATION BY THE NORTH KOREAN
AMBASSADOR. ROBINSON

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